

Utilizing Risks and Needs to Improve Outcomes in Juvenile Justice

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Structured Decision Making Instruments

- Consistent with the mission of DJJ, structured decision making instruments are used to ensure that a juvenile is placed in the least restrictive environment necessary to meet public safety needs and to ensure the availability of services to meet the individual rehabilitative needs of the youth and families we see.

Improving Practices and Outcomes

- Use of standardized assessment tools and practice models at various points in the process
- Detention Assessment Instrument (DAI) to assist with decision of whether to detain
- Risk/needs assessments (YASI) for developing pre-dispositional reports and for supervision and case planning

Detention Assessment Instrument

- The DAI is a structured decision making tool for detention decision making by DJJ intake officers.
- DAI was implemented November 2002 in response to a directive from the General Assembly.
- Incorporates a limited set of objective, public safety-related criteria.
- Results are available for judges at the detention hearing.

Rationale

- Legislative mandate
- In FY 2001 placements to detention were 18,494. In FY 2007 placements to detention were 15,018.
- The DAI allows for increased objectivity, consistency, and fairness in the detention process.
- Reduce detention placements for juveniles who can be safely managed in the community through parental supervision and/or use of enhanced control through various detention alternatives (e.g., EM, outreach, evening reporting).

Intended Outcomes

- Increase consistency, equity, and transparency in detention decisions
- Decrease detention of juveniles with less serious and less chronic offenses
- Increase the likelihood of detention of juveniles alleged to have committed serious offenses or a threat to fail to appear in court
- Have a neutral or positive effect on public safety outcomes (pre-trial re-arrest or FTA)

Assessing the Key Public Safety Outcomes

- New offenses while awaiting trial - Reduced
- Failure to Appear - Reduced

Study Conclusions

- Conducted a validation study of those released according to the DAI to see if they re-offended in the pre-trial period or failed to appear
- The Virginia DAI appropriately assesses risk with regard to public safety outcomes, especially when the indicated decision is not overridden
- Reiner, Miller, & Gangal. (2007). Public Safety Outcomes of Virginia's Detention Assessment Instrument. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, 58, 31-41.

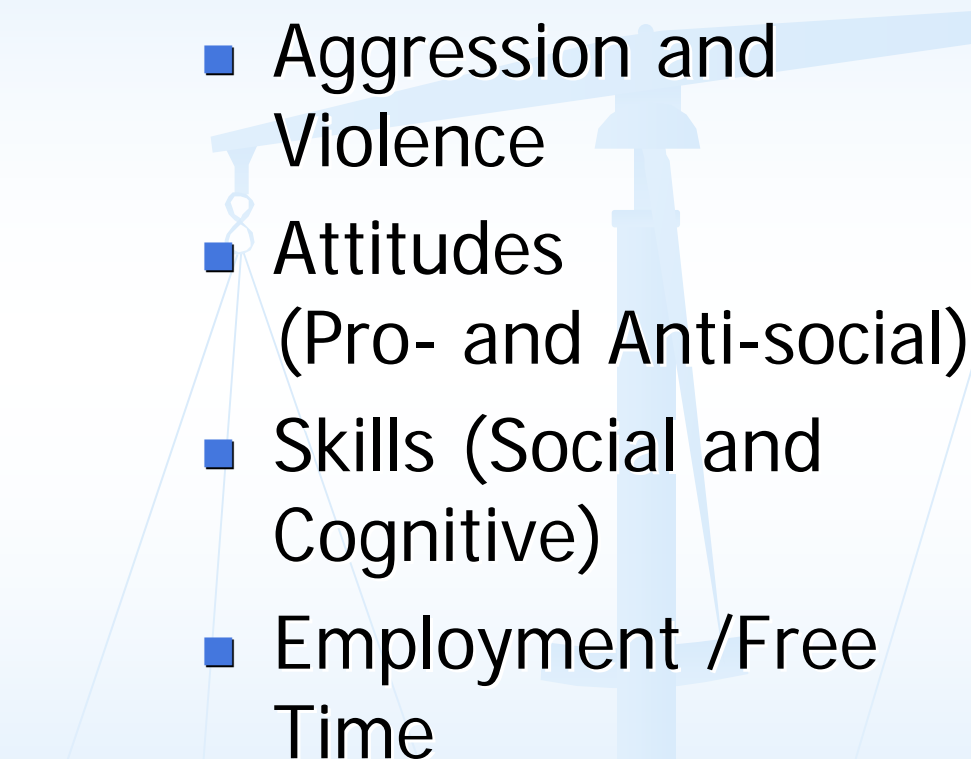
Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI)

- A “fourth-generation” risk/needs assessment tool that is replacing our current probation risk assessment
- Typically used for the pre-dispositional report or immediately following disposition
- Integrates current research evidence on the most effective models for intervening with juvenile offenders (risk, needs, and responsivity)

Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI)

- An integrated assessment and case planning tool which:
 - Classifies juveniles according to their relative risk of reoffending and determines level of supervision
 - Considers both static (historical) and dynamic (current) risk factors, traditionally referred to as criminogenic needs
 - Assesses protective factors
 - Assists with enhancing juvenile and family engagement in desired behavior change

YASI Domains

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- Legal History
 - Family
 - School
 - Community and Peers
 - Alcohol and Drugs
 - Mental Health
 - Aggression and Violence
 - Attitudes (Pro- and Anti-social)
 - Skills (Social and Cognitive)
 - Employment /Free Time

Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI)

- Phased implementation with approximately half of the Court Service
- Goal is to complete implementation within 12 – 18 months